

# DAVE Pigeon

## Winner

Greenhouse Funny Prize

North Somerset Teachers' Book Award

Surrey Libraries' Children's Book Award

Fantastic Book Award

'Readers will love this  
**action-packed** story.'  
*Reading Zone*

'A fun read, this book  
is **pigeontastic!**'  
*Guardian*

## Shortlisted

Sainsbury's Book Award

Alligator's Mouth Award

Crystal Kite Award

Sheffield Children's Book Award

'Every page is **packed  
with laughs.**'  
*Michelle Robinson*

'An adventure that  
is **guaranteed to have  
you in stitches.**'  
*Book Lover Jo*

'A really **enjoyable** read.'  
*Books for Keeps*

'A really good **laugh  
out loud** book!'  
Robert, age 7,  
*LoveReading4Kids*

'Readers will love it ...  
**full of daring and bravery,**  
and much backfiring of  
ridiculous schemes.'  
*School Librarian*

'A funny, **quirky** and  
**fast-paced** book.'  
*Inis Children's Books  
Ireland*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Swapna Haddow lives in New Zealand with her son, her husband and Archie the dog. She spends her time writing, eating cake and making sure her son doesn't flatten her husband as he attempts to master his human cannonball trick.



## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Sheena Dempsey is a children's author and illustrator. She loves to draw animals, from dirty rats to mean cats and heroic pigeons too. She lives in Folkstone with her partner, Mick, and their greyhound, Sandy.

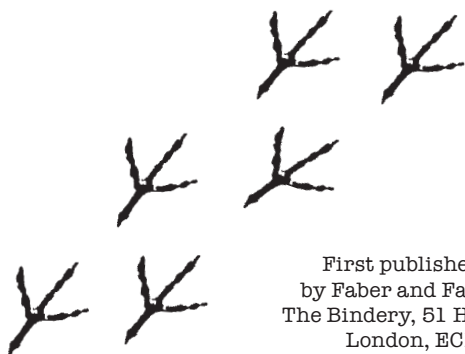
The title 'DAVE Pigeon (Kittens)' is presented in a playful, hand-drawn style. 'DAVE' is in large, bold, grey block letters with a white outline and a stippled texture. 'Pigeon' is in a black, rounded, handwritten font. '(Kittens)' is in a smaller, black, handwritten font. The entire title is surrounded by small, grey, decorative elements resembling feathers or snowflakes.

DAVE  
Pigeon  
(Kittens)

Dave Pigeon's book on how  
to raise a bunch of kittens  
when you're a pigeon

By  
Dave Pigeon, Skipper,  
Swapna Haddow  
and  
Sheena Dempsey,  
all of whom know absolutely  
nothing about kittens

faber



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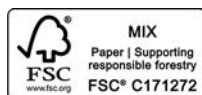
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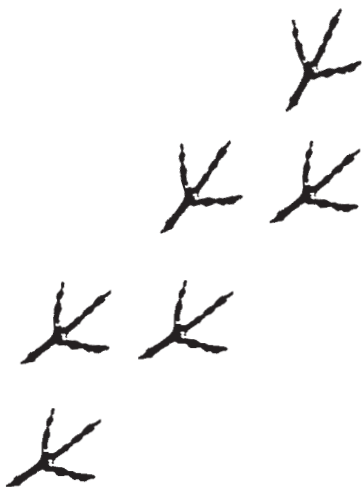
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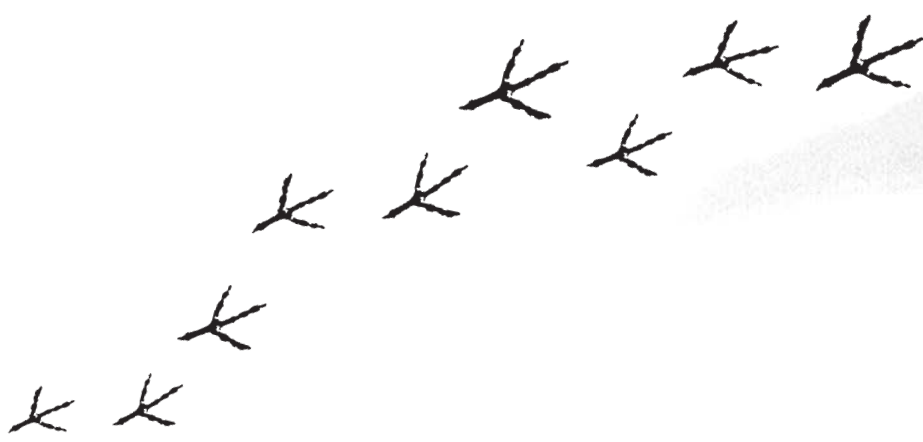
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2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

This story is inspired by the whopper  
kererū that flew past my office on a  
Tuesday morning in May while I was the  
University of Otago College of Education  
Creative New Zealand Children's  
Writer in Residence in 2022 - SH

For Nella - SD





1

## The Cat Meaner than Mean Cat

‘Does Mean Cat seem a bit different to you?’ Dave asked, as he peered out of our shed window.

Dave had wiped clear a spyhole through the thick dirty smear across the middle of the glass. It had been growing more and more grimy since we moved into the shed at the bottom of the Human Lady’s garden.



Dave insisted on eating scavenged snacks at the window every evening and now it was splattered in a technicolour mess of crumbs, curry stains and sticky rice bits.

‘What do you mean?’ I said.

‘Does she seem a bit meaner?’ he said.  
‘And maybe a bit stripier?’

*Stripier?*

I clambered out of the shredded paper nest I’d made by the paint tins and flapped up to join Dave by the window. I expected to see the familiar fluffy cat who had tormented us for four books, who had ripped up Dave’s wing and who constantly tried to sabotage our plans to move into her Human Lady’s house.

But there, glaring at us from the cat flap



on the opposite side of the garden, was a completely different cat.

‘Dave,’ I said. ‘That’s not Mean Cat!’

‘I know,’ he replied. ‘She’s changed so much, it’s like she’s a completely different cat.’

‘No!’ I insisted. ‘That *is* a completely different cat.’

Dave squinted and pressed his beak up against the window. ‘Are you sure, Skipper?’

I looked at the menacing face across the garden again. Mean Cat had always had a mean vibe about her but this cat was unlike any cat I’d seen before. She sent a shudder ruffling down the feathers on my back and in that moment it felt like the shed grew darker, as though a storm was coming in

overhead. I had to shut my eyes quickly as I felt the cat's stare burn right through me. This cat had a vibe that was meaner than mean.

When I opened my eyes again, I resisted looking back at the menacing face in the cat flap and instead scanned the rest of the garden. I nudged Dave's head down so that he was now looking at the bin because something had caught *my* eye.

'Yes, I'm sure,' I replied. 'Because if *that* is Mean Cat, then who is sitting by the bin?'

Dave's eyes widened as he spotted the *actual* Mean Cat by the steel bin. And then he came to the only logical explanation Dave could.

'Mean Cat cloned herself?' he gasped.



I didn't even have to ask how that would've been possible.

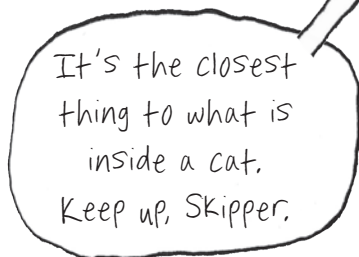
'She obviously built herself a science lab and got herself a pair of science goggles for her cat face and a cat-shaped lab coat and then probably made some sort of evil cat laugh-meow sound that would send chills through the actual evil scientists' network,' Dave continued, barely taking a breath. 'She was probably assisted by a moss-covered rock with googly eyes called Steven Melonchunks who, though small, was the actual brains behind the cloning because a cat brain is incapable of making any clever decisions.'



A rock called Steven  
Melonchunks?



Dave puffed out his chest with an all-knowing authority. 'And then Mean Cat jumped into a bird bath full of baked beans to copy her cat essence.'



'The cat essence was split in two so she could still stay as Mean Cat but also double up as a new Mean Cat ...'



‘That’s Aunty’s Cat, you fool,’ came the voice of Tinkles, the annoying canary who lived with Him-Next-Door.

The golden-yellow fluffball fluttered in through the hole in a wooden panel of the shed door and perched on a nearby shelf.

‘Who’s Aunty’s Cat?’ Dave asked, suspiciously.

Tinkles smirked like she was sitting on a treasure map that led to a chest full of jammy biscuits – my favourites.

‘If you want to know, it’s going to cost you.’ Tinkles grinned.

Dave blew out hard from his beak, leaving a smoggy stain on the only clean part of the window.

‘What do you want, Tinkles?’



Tinkles strolled along the shelf, lightly dragging the edge of her bright wing along the jars.

‘The Human Man has me on a diet of birdseed and air,’ she whined. ‘It’s top quality stuff but it tastes like a baboon’s bottom.’

‘What’s that got to do with us?’ I asked.

‘I need some of your biscuits to wash the flavour out of my mouth.’ Tinkles shrugged.

‘And then I’ll tell you *everything* you need to know about Aunty’s Cat.’

Dave scoffed. ‘No. Absolutely not. There’s barely enough biscuits for me.’

‘Or me,’ I chimed in.

We’d been scammed by Tinkles in the past and Dave had barely gotten over the time she invited every single bird in the neighbourhood round to eat all the biscuits in the Human Lady’s house.

‘Fine,’ Tinkles said. She plumped up her feathers and made to look like she was heading off. ‘I don’t suppose you need to know why even Mean Cat is terrified of her.’

I glanced out of the window again and was struck that Mean Cat didn’t seem to be outside for one of her pigeon-ambush



patrols, but that instead she was *indeed* cowering behind the bin, hopping from paw to paw, trying to stay out of Aunty's Cat's view.

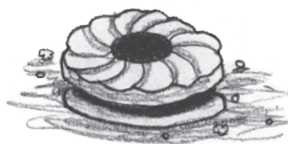
I never wanted to listen to Tinkles normally. She was full of hot air and canary dust but there was a tense knot in the pit of my belly about Aunty's Cat - I knew I had to go against all my pigeon instincts to find out who exactly this cat was.

'Wait!' I squawked, as Tinkles set off.

She hovered in mid-air. 'Yes?'

'Maybe I have a spare biscuit or two,' I said.

'What are you doing, Skipper?' Dave hissed.



I nudged Dave back to the window. ‘Look at Mean Cat. Something isn’t right.’

I fished out two jammy biscuits from behind the toolbox and kicked them over to Tinkles. She leapt on them like a hen on eggs.

‘This better not be another one of your scams,’ I warned Tinkles.

‘Oh no,’ she said, her beak already full of shortbread and sticky strawberry jam. ‘This is the truth about Aunty’s Cat and why you should both be scared for your lives.’

